

ONE PARISH ONE PRISONER



WOULD YOU LIKE A REENTRY SUPPORT TEAM, FULL OF CARING PEOPLE IN YOUR RELEASE TOWN, JUST FOR YOU?

“One Parish One Prisoner is truly genius... So clear, so prophetic... I love this idea!”
–Father Greg Boyle, Founder of Homeboy Industries, author of Tattoos On the Heart

“We need a new ‘underground railroad’ today.”

–Michelle Alexander, author of The New Jim Crow

“It takes a really supportive group of positive people—not just supportive services—to rebuild your life.”

–Gina Castillo, Executive Director of Unloop, formerly incarcerated in Oregon

 **UNDERGROUND
MINISTRIES**



ARCHDIOCESE
OF SEATTLE



PRESBYTERY OF THE
NORTHWEST COAST



THE
GREATER
NORTHWEST
AREA
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



Northwest Washington Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

FOR INCARCERATED CANDIDATES APPLYING

What is One Parish One Prisoner?

We believe that people on the inside and the outside need each other – for both our healing.

There are roughly the same amount of churches in Washington State as there are people in prison. What if every imprisoned person had one of these tight-knit communities writing to them, learning with them, embracing them, **supporting them through the reentry process and the new life they're seeking?**

It would empty the prison system. And it would change every community. It's happening.

This is not a housing program, a religious program, or a financial resource.

This is about building new, caring relationships with a support team and learning together.

OUR MISSION: Opening new relationships of embrace and trust between the incarcerated and the communities to which they will return—for our mutual transformation and resurrection.

These parish teams that start in faith communities are **not** trying to change your beliefs or make you attend worship services. They **ARE** interested in a two-way **relationship with you**. It's only in new relationships that we learn together, and erase the walls between "us" and "them."

Basic requirements to apply:

- You are **releasing 2 or more years from now** to a county in **Washington state**.
- You have a **sincere desire and readiness to work on building open, trusting relationships**—through letters, then visits, then release into the community—with a new group of friends.
- You've engaged in positive, educational **programming in your facility**.
- **You are ready to explore your own story, healing, and even spiritual growth with new people**. You're not required to be or become a religious person.
- Parents with children are especially encouraged to apply.

Please complete and send with a picture of yourself to:

Underground Ministries/OPOP
PO Box 174
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Here's a letter from an incarcerated applicant, someone on the inside, who has been in relationship with their One Parish One Prisoner team out in the town of release. They have been writing, learning, and planning for reentry together for about a year.

To my dearest One Parish One Prisoner team,

This has been a long, tumultuous journey and I am grateful for this brighter future because you all have contributed positively to my life. This is no small feat. I have had very little in the aspect of people who are profoundly admirable role models, mentors, and best of all, friends. My past is something I look back on to analyze different areas of growth and now, I have hope for a better future because of this phenomenal support system you have all given me. I am truly blessed for having each and every one of you in my life because before this I stood in fear as I looked at the realm of possibilities that came with my release. Now, I don't stand alone. I am able to stand amongst true friends that bring me comfort in knowing that no obstacle is too difficult. We work together as a unit and when I don't have the answers I require, you all have made it possible to find the necessary answers no matter how tremendous or minute.

For this I cannot thank you enough! I am attempting to capture the magnitude of my gratitude in this letter to all of you. Although this is our last letter from prison, I will enjoy being able to express these thoughts in person—together!

Thank you all and until next time,

With love your Friend,

R

And here's what one of our veteran parish team members has to say about the journey.

A really important thing to remember when you're starting this journey with One Parish One Prisoner is that the experience is transformational, not only for your releasing incarcerated friend, but for you, by exploring the monthly learning modules and living through them, communicating with this new friend, you will learn a lot of things about hidden secrets that you have. It will help you become a more complete human being. And the love that you have for this fellow human being will be beyond your wildest imaginations.

C

Once you send this application in, we'll get in touch with you to plan together. We'll do our intake process to best prepare you and your future team for the journey—**your information will not be shared unless we have your permission to do so**. Remember, this is about relationship: trust and embrace. We at Underground Ministries, will try to get out of the way of these new relationships as much as we can, and we hope you don't try to rush into this. Take your time and enjoy the journey.

On the parish team side, here's what it looks like.

1. Church Leadership Blessing: We want the entire community in support for the journey.
2. Congregational Awareness: We'll help them invite everybody to participate—either as team members or as support players along the way.
3. Team Assembly: 7-9 people will register to be your team. These are the people that will be writing letters with you (then JPays, phone calls, video chats, in-person visits), reading the monthly learning modules with you, and helping build your reentry plan.
4. Paired with Incarcerated Friend: If everything fits so far and everyone is ready, we'll mail out Starter Kits to the team—you'll get yours in the mail.
5. Schedule Kickoff Orientation: This is when it begins. We'll send out Starter Kits. We'll meet with your team on the outside to go through some guidelines, contemplate the big picture of Mass Incarceration in the US, introduce you, do a crash-course in what you can/can't send in to prison, and start the journey.

This takes a long time, and we're constantly working to get parish teams ready for when folks like you apply.

We'll be in touch with you along the way.

Talk soon,

Alvin Shim
alvin@undergroundministries.org

Director, One Parish One Prisoner

Underground Ministries
PO Box 174
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

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 UNDERGROUND
MINISTRIES

NOTICE: Release of Information

Once we receive your application, we will first check to see if timeline and geography fits. One Parish One Prisoner begins, at the latest, twelve months before release. This is why we hope to have enough time to work for you, getting a team together.

If that fits, we will reach out to various people—your listed personal references, a background check, etc. in order to verify some information: ERD, release area, and anything we might need to know to better prepare/pair you with your Parish Team.

We will not share these details with your Parish Team. We keep this information internal. It's best for us at Underground Ministries to allow you and your new friends to get to know each at your own pace and timing.

We do not disqualify applicants based on information we learn from this process. This information is used by us to better prepare for your One Parish One Prisoner journey.

We will send you the next portion of your application soon, as we are constantly working to equip/prepare church teams across Washington State.

CAUTION. This is often the part of the process that takes the longest. Be patient with us and with the process. We will be in touch with you via mail and JPay for the next steps.

It might be that we'd like to share excerpts of your application to help raise awareness— of your story and many like yours. It's our intention to amplify and honor voices, in doing so. When this happens, if the original source agrees, we always remove or adjust any specific identifying details.

- Sounds good, count me in.
- No thanks.

Your name and signature

Today's date

